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ABSTRACT

This essay blends practical reflection on current efforts to develop a role-playing curriculum at the University of Pittsburgh with a theoretical investigation of role-playing as a pedagogic technique. This paper examines educational literature on role-playing pedagogy as the topic is treated in a variety of academic fields including medicine, education, industrial psychology, economics, and political science. A theoretical examination is woven into a discussion of practical efforts to utilize the role-playing approach as a tool to teach the rhetoric of medical ethics at the University of Pittsburgh. Discussion topics include: (1) the dynamics involved in role-playing simulations; (2) the potential benefits of role-playing; (3) the pitfalls and challenges involved in a role-playing curriculum; and (4) the potential of role-playing as a pedagogical tool for learning the rhetoric of medical ethics. Appendixes include a bioethics role-playing curriculum rhetoric and three activities involving role-playing. (CCM)

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Role-Playing Rhetoric of Science Pedagogy and the Study of Medical Ethics

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Learning can be difficult in a school environment where teachers monopolize the flow of communication and institutional pressures such as standardized test sorting and inflexible curricula lock teachers and students into rote exercises. In these situations, student silence becomes a symptom of the lifeless and dull pedagogical environment as well as a cause of spiraling withdrawal, alienation, and apathy on the part of students. In such "passive learning" environments, students mechanically write down material but rarely reflect on it (see Brookfield; deNeve & Heppner; King). Given the grave political consequences of widespread student disempowerment (see Freire, *The Politics, Pedagogy*), it is incumbent on critical intellectuals to recognize the shortcomings of pedagogical approaches that reproduce these dynamics in the classroom. This recognition can open up vistas for alternative teaching strategies geared toward energizing pedagogical spaces with student voices, strategies that have the potential to generate "kinetic knowledge--that is, knowledge with the potential to wreak havoc" (Kincheloe, *Toward a Critical* 183).

As an example of this sort of "active learning" approach, role-playing simulation is a classroom exercise that has potential to break up the teacher's communication monopoly and flood the classroom with diverse and expressive rhetorical performances by students. This essay blends practical reflection on current efforts to develop role-playing curriculum at the University of Pittsburgh with theoretical investigation of role-playing as a

pedagogic technique. Theoretically, the essay examines educational literature on role-playing pedagogy as the topic is treated in a variety of academic fields including medicine, education, industrial psychology, economics, and political science. This theoretical examination is woven into discussion of practical efforts to utilize the role-playing approach as a tool to teach the rhetoric of medical ethics at the University of Pittsburgh (see Appendices). The brief consideration of the dynamics involved in role-playing simulations (in part one), will give way to discussion of the potential pedagogical benefits of role-playing (in part two). The pitfalls and challenges involved in role-playing curriculum will then be highlighted (in part three), while role-playing's potential as a pedagogical tool for learning the rhetoric of medical ethics will serve as the focus of the fourth and final section of the essay.

Role play dynamics

In their book, *Simulation in the Classroom,* Taylor and Walford explain that "[r]ole-play relies on the spontaneous performance of participants, when they have been placed in a hypothetical situation" (19). In their formulation, Taylor and Walford isolate three key aspects of the role-playing process.

> 1) Players take on roles which are representative of the real world, and then make decisions in response to their assessment of the setting in which they find themselves;
> 2) They experience simulated consequences which relate to their decisions and their general performance;
> 3) They 'monitor' the results of their actions, and are brought to reflect upon the relationship between their own decisions and the resultant consequences (17).

Moore provides additional detail in his description of role-playing as a pedagogical approach. Emphasizing pre-performance brainstorming as an essential feature of the process, Moore suggests that initially, students "[f]reewrite a practice paragraph about the topic from the point of view of the character. Try to assume his or her voice. Imagine the character being to asked to speak about the subject and write what he or she would say" (194). After this initial brainstorming process, a secondary discussion takes place, where students meet in groups to "review others' papers, look for stereotypes and misconceptions ... [and] [g]ive suggestions to the role-player on how to improve the character's argument" (Moore 194).

After scenes are developed and character sketches completed, role-play participants are ready to move from the realm of invention to the stage of performance, where students engage in simulated dialogues with each other, working to fashion statements that square with their character sketches and draw creatively from assigned readings and background knowledge.

Pedagogical benefits

The dynamic communicative interplay generated through role-playing exercises carries with it a number of significant pedagogical benefits. Most basically, by foregrounding students' oral performances as the key sources of knowledge, "[a]n appropriately timed role-playing exercise can stimulate involvement and enhance the learning environment" (van der Meulen

Rodgers 217). Intensive student participation of this sort can afford unique learning opportunities to students, enabling them to experiment with their self-identities and grasp the constructed nature of role fixity in social life. In role-playing exercises, "provided the learning climate is one that affords both trust and challenge, the possibility of receiving feedback and the opportunity to change direction, correct errors and observe the consequences in the here and now, permits the learner to risk extending the boundaries of the restricted self ..." (McCaughan & Scott 9). By encouraging experimentation in identity construction, role-playing "helps students discover divergent viewpoints and overcome stereotypes as they examine subjects from multiple perspectives ..." (Moore 190).

The "kinetic" knowledge (Kincheloe, *Toward a Critical* 183) generated by active student involvement in meaning-making is differentiated from the reductive and detached knowledge transmitted to students through top-down didactic exercises. Just one example of an axis of difference that separates these two kinds of knowledge is mnemonic value. "The role play simulation shows promise as an active learning technique which fosters student interest, helps students apply material to real world situations, and may be remembered by students well after the course ends" (deNeve & Heppner 244). For example, a follow-up evaluation of students eight months after the conclusion of an industrial psychology course that featured role playing as a pedagogical technique, "showed a tendency for students to remember

more information from the role play simulations than from the lectures" (deNeve & Heppner 243).

Pedagogical challenges

There are a number of important pedagogical challenges that inhere in the project of developing role-play curriculum to energize classroom discussion and stimulate appetites for learning on the part of students. First, it is important to consider that the degree to which the benefits of any role-playing curriculum can be realized depends in large part on the prior creation of a favorable learning environment in the classroom. Role-playing involves risk-taking, and mutual trust among students is important to counter the tendency that the alien nature of a student's encounter with an extremely different role may cause "withdrawal or defensive panic" (McCaughan & Scott 11). Indeed, it can be frightening to be put into role that is wholly foreign from previous life experience (McCaughan & Scott 11), so it is important for teachers to build a positive classroom environment that focuses student attention on the broader purposes of schooling, linking students together in a common project of educational emancipation (see Giroux *Ideology, Schooling*). When the communicative space of the classroom transformed in such a positive way, potential is created for students to learn in multiple intellectual and affective registers. With role-playing, "... the learning involves more of the self - it demands a

creative output calling on both the intellectual and affective areas of the learner" (McCaughan & Scott 9).

A separate challenge lies in wait for the teacher who pursues the role-playing format as a pedagogical tool. As an intervenor in the unfolding role-play simulation, the teacher "must find a balance between over-involvement and detachment" (McCaughan & Scott 12). Over-involvement on the part of the teacher in scripting the action, controlling the flow of dialogue, and prompting plot twists can simply end up reproducing many of the same power imbalances shot through the more traditional top-down, "passive" learning approaches discussed earlier in this essay. On the other hand, teachers adopting stances of total detachment forfeit crucial opportunities to spark profound learning opportunities for students by tweaking the trajectory of discussion through introduction of subtle plot twists. For example, minor alterations in the fact pattern established for a scene (e.g. packaged in the form of a "news update" or "urgent memo") can nudge students to rethink their roles and revise their statements in light of challenging new situations. Other potential devices for generating productive role instability include random (rather than voluntary) assignment of generation of roles. In this regard, Moore's role-playing design introduces role randomness by using dice rolls to generate character traits (190).

Teacher interventions can also occur on a broader level, where changes of pedagogical venue can introduce heuristically

valuable learning opportunities to students as they experiment with performance *beyond* the formal classroom space for discussion. For example, "... changing the physical location of the class or taping the session can add realism and reinforce the extraordinary nature of the role-playing exercise" (van der Muelen Rodgers 219).

The medical ethics context

The role-play approach has wide potential applicability as a pedagogical tool in multiple academic disciplines; "... [T]he role play simulation can easily be modified for use in such diverse disciplines as economics, law, medicine, political science, and sociology" (deNeve & Heppner 245). Given that "... one of the main purposes of medical ethics education is development of the skills of moral reflection and argument in light of moral positions opposed by the student's own" (Gillon 4), role-playing seems particularly promising as a pedagogical framework for medical ethics curricula. In this final section, I explore some of the promises and pitfalls involved in role-playing approach to medical ethics pedagogy that locates the "rhetoric" of medical ethics in student role-playing performances.

Several medical schools have adopted explicitly role-playing as a curricular tool to generate student knowledge in the area of medical ethics. For example, postgraduate medical students at the University of Crete have explored doctor-patient relationships from within a role-playing format (see Lionis & Koutis, *et al.*) At the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC),

the medical ethics curricula is designed around ten role-playing modules that cover areas such as truth telling, consent, capacity, substitute decision-making, confidentiality, conflict of interest, futility, euthanasia, resource allocations, and research ethics (see Singer). Each of these modules casts students in particular roles appropriate to generate multiple perspectives on various hypothetical situations placing participants in vexing ethical quandaries (see Appendix I).

For example, in the RCPSC module on research ethics, one student is cast as a hypothetical stroke patient seeking experimental treatment, while other students are cast in the roles of doctors and administrators charged with weighing the conflicting ethical considerations involved and rendering a collective decision regarding whether or not to proceed with the experimental treatment. This structure carries the imprint of the overall objective pursued by RCPSC ethic curriculum:

> This curriculum was developed in consultation with medicine program directors throughout Canada. Each module contains curricular objective, a lesson plan, a bioethics bottom line, and references. Several include teaching aids with a suggested pedagogic method such as standardized patient (SP) scripts, descriptions of available videos, and suggestions for transparencies. During a typical one-hour session, the first twenty minutes might be spent with the pedagogic method and the remaining time in a facilitated discussion using the lesson plan provided (Singer).

One contribution that the field of communication can make to emergent models of role-playing medical ethics curricula is the gift of an expansive rhetorical vision. An appreciation of the layers of audience involved in contentious medical ethics

controversies can afford unique perspective on the multitude of possible viewpoints to be taken in any given dispute.

For example, in the public controversy over the proper scope of HMO coverage for alternative medical treatments such as homeopathy and acupuncture, a full understanding of the multiple perspectives in play requires appreciation of roles far removed from the basic doctor-patient unit (see Appendix II). Insurance brokers, diverse other clients, politicians, business investors, and many other actors all have stakes in the outcome of HMO decisions. Given this, in order for a role-playing medical ethics curriculum to substantially illuminate the public dimensions of medical ethics controversies, such a curriculum would need to incorporate many basic rhetorical insights related to the nature of audience as well as the manner in which the complex entwinements of interacting parties enables and constrains rhetorical performance.

Conclusion

In the struggle to invent new pedagogies that break up teacher monopolies on classroom discussion, role-playing simulation has emerged as an impressive curricular innovation with the potential to energize active learning environments within the classroom. Since any effective medical ethics pedagogy necessarily must focus on the differences of perspectives held by diverse stakeholders in medical ethics controversies, it would seem natural that teachers of medical ethics be drawn to

pedagogical strategies such as role-playing. These interactive and highly performative strategies carry the potential to generate entirely new avenues of learning.

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Appendix I
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
Bioethics role-playing curriculum rubric

Bioethics Education Project: Medicine

Key Issue	Curricular Objectives	Paradigm Case	Pedagogic Method	
Truth Telling	To be able to use arguments supporting truth telling To recognize exceptions to truth telling	Don't tell my husband he has cancer	Standardized patient (SP) / discussion	
Consent	To know the ethical, legal and policy justifications for consent, and the elements of consent	Nancy B - informed refusal of care	SP / discussion	
Capacity	To be able to define capacity To be able to conduct a screening assessment for capacity to consent to treatment	Candura - refusal of amputation for gangrene	SP / discussion	ACE hotlink
Substitute Decision Making	To know the justification for substitute decision making To be able to perform substitute decision making, including in an emergency	Cruzan	SP / discussion	Living Will hotlink
Professional Conduct: Confidentiality	To know the justification for confidentiality To recognize exceptions to confidentiality To be able to negotiate with a patient who meets one of these exceptions	"David Plant"	SP / discussion	
Conflict of Interest	To understand fiduciary duties To know the distinction between primary and secondary interests To be able to discuss methods of resolving or managing conflicts of interest	Pizza rounds	Critical incident/ discussion CMA guidelines	
Appropriate Use of Life- Sustaining Treatment: Futility	To know the key ethical, legal, and policy issues with respect to "futility" cases To have an approach to the pressing demands for "inappropriate" life-sustaining treatment in practice	Metastatic cancer patient; Jewish patient in lengthy persistent vegetative state	Discussion	
Euthanasia/ Assisted Suicide	To know the arguments for and against legalization of euthanasia/assisted suicide To be able to distinguish between euthanasia/assisted suicide and decisions to forego treatment or palliative care	Rodriguez, Morrison	Role Play / discussion	Link to Surgery End of Life module
Resource Allocation	To be able to discuss resource allocation and justice To recognize morally relevant criteria for resource allocation To recognize legally proscribed criteria for resource allocation	Transplantation No beds in ICU	Critical incident / discussion	
Research Ethics	To develop a framework for understanding the ethical issues raised by performing research in human subjects To understand the concept of clinical equipoise To understand the procedural requirements for conducting a clinical research study	Stroke patient, Placebo controlled trial	Critical incident / discussion	

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Appendix II
Managed care / alternative medicine role playing scenario
Evidence / Fall 1998 - 99
November 17, 1998

Scene #1: HMO coverage appeals hearing

After two years of failed conventional treatments, a patient suffering from chronic pain sought alternative herbal and oil therapy based on the ancient Hindu medical system ayurveda. The patient's doctor submitted a proposed prescription to the patient's HMO provider (Purple Cross), which promptly rejected the request on the grounds that no credible scientific evidence existed documenting the medical effectiveness of ayurveda treatment (the only available evidence on effectiveness was anecdotal). The patient complained through the Purple Cross appeals process, and the case reached the final review stage, where the scene was set for a determinative hearing. The Purple Cross appeals process is unique in that it provides the opportunity for peripheral stakeholders (such as other patients and doctors) to have a say in the decision.

This scene will be performed following an intensive brainstorming session in which cast members will huddle with advisors to generate character sketches and performance strategies.

Cast

Chronic pain patient seeking ayurveda treatment: **Dana Caruso**
Advisors: **Sara Cagno, Jonathan Rosenson, Shannon Sell**

Doctor prescribing ayurveda treatment: **Mike Tumolo**
Advisors: **Safula Lewis, Shannon Burke, Jason Brown**

Traditional doctor opposed to granting coverage: **Rana Wright**
Advisors: **Mark Sommer, Dontaye Williams, Suzy D'Embeau**

Purple Cross CEO (and chairperson of the hearing): **Eric English**
Advisors: **Amyjo Firda, Cory Lockard**

Purple Cross analyst opposed to granting coverage: **Doug Schake**
Advisors: **John Welch, Curtis Saffer, James Tunney**

Purple Cross analyst in favor of granting coverage: **Kirsten Larson**
Advisors: **Nicholas Breznick, Michelle Klebba, Chris Burnett**

Traditional Purple Cross patient opposed to granting coverage: **Daniel Fritz**
Advisors: **Kortni Webb, Kira Swencki, Farrah Koenig**

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Apendix III

Terrorism role playing scenarios
Evidence / Fall 1998 - 99
October 27, 1998

Scene #1: U.N. General Assembly

Pakistan, Sudan and Afganistan propose a resolution condemning the U.S. Tomahawk attacks as violations of international law. The resolution also calls for inspections of the bombing sites to investigate the validity of U.S. claims that the Khartoum pharmaceutical plant was producing VX gas for Iraq. The scene will unfold with the U.N. ambassadors for Pakistan, Sudan and Afghanistan presenting their resolution (players should write this up ahead of time), and a full floor debate ensuing. Kofi Annan will chair the deliberations.

Cast

Sudanese ambassadors: Sara Cagno, Jonathan Rosenson, Shanon Sell
Pakistani ambassadors: Eric English, Kirsten Larson, Safula Lewis
Afghani ambassadors: Shannon Burke, Jason Brown, Mark Sommer
U.S. ambassadors: Dontaye Williams, Suzy D'Embeau, Dana Carson,
German ambassadors: Cory Lockard, Rana Wright
Kofi Annan, U.N. General Secretary: Douglas Schake

Scene #2: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting

Gen. Harry Shelton, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, calls a meeting of the Joint Chiefs after the U.S. Tomahawk attacks are announced publicly and explains to his colleagues why he did not consult with them prior to the bombing (read the Hersh article closely for further background).

Cast

Gen Harry Shelton: Seth Mowrey
4 other Joint Chiefs of Staff: John Welch, Dana Caruso, Daniel Fritz

Scene #3 Chancellor's meeting on Semester at Sea

Because of the increased threat of terrorist retaliation following the U.S. Tomahawk strikes, the insurance company that covers Pitt's Semester at Sea program drops its coverage. The Chancellor calls a meeting to decide what to do. The Provost explains that to continue the Semester at Sea program, it will be necessary to secure a special insurance package from Lloyds of London. One catch: the expense of this package would have to be paid for with a 5% tuition hike. Players deliberate about whether to sign on to this new insurance deal or scrap the Semester at Sea program altogether.

Cast

Pitt Chancellor: James Tunney
Pitt Provost: Nicholas Breznick
Student scheduled for Semester at Sea next term: Mike Tumolo
Three other students: Michelle Klebba, Chris Burnett, Farrah Koenig
University lawyer: Kortni Webb
Lloyds of London insurance broker: Kira Swencki

Appendix IV

Role Playing Public Debate Exercise

Grades 4 - 5

- Horace A. Mann Elementary School
- Penn State University
- University of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, PA
May 11, 1998

Teachers:
Darlene Operanosia, Mann School
Ramona Vaughn, Mann School
Gordon Mitchell, University of Pittsburgh
Melissa Butler, Penn State University
Ron Von Burg, University of Pittsburgh

Grades 4 - 8

- Washington Communication Acad.
- Penn State University
- University of Pittsburgh

Rockford, IL
May 22, 1998

Teachers:
Linda Dengler, Washington
Prudy Court, Washington
Diane Ryan, Washington
Gordon Mitchell, Univ. Pittsburgh
Melissa Butler, Penn State University

Background/Rationale

This exercise is designed to spur informative public debate in the elementary classroom. While any relevant topic may be used, for this exercise, the topic is corporate involvement in public education. Students debate this topic through role-playing argumentation in a fictional scenario that involves a hypothetical offer by Reebok, Inc. made to Horace A. Mann Elementary School. By considering the offer from a number of different perspectives (Reebok executive, student, teacher, and parent), and then engaging in debate, students will gain the opportunity to learn more about the corporate financing issue, while developing multiple communication skills related to argumentation and debate.

Step One: Introduction / brainstorming

- Explain basic nature of exercise: to debate about an important issue through role-playing (2 minutes).

- Introduce the topic by starting with explanation of Greenbrier High School (Evans, GA) situation: Senior Mike Cameron was suspended March 20, 1998 for wearing Pepsi T-shirt on Coke Day, part of a contest to get $10,000 cash for the school.

Then move on to Reebok's hypothetical offer. Sketch precise terms of the offer on the chalkboard, and ask students to imagine that a public relations group from Reebok, Inc. comes to their school and explains the offer at a school assembly (5 minutes):

Reebok, Inc.'s Offer to Elementary School

GIFTS	CONDITIONS
• $1 million in computers for school school.	• No wearing competitor shoes or shirts to
• Each student gets a new pair of shoes	• No talking badly about Reebok in school. • Violations result in suspension from school.

• Answer questions from students regarding the offer and trigger brief general brainstorming by asking students their initial opinions of the Reebok, Inc. offer (5 minutes).

• Introduce concept of arguing from different perspectives by writing four possible perspectives for the scenario (Reebok, Inc. executive, parent, teacher, student) on the chalkboard. Leave sufficient space between each to write under each (2 minutes).

• Continue brainstorming, but ask for each contribution to be prefaced by "From the viewpoint / perspective of ..." Write students' contributions on the chalkboard next to the appropriate roles (7 minutes).

Step Two: Small group breakouts

• Break into four small groups led by one teacher each. Each group will represent a different role in the debate (Reebok, Inc. executive, parent, teacher, student). (2 minutes).

• Brainstorm arguments in small groups. Teachers challenge students to invent arguments that grow out of their particular role-playing perspectives. This can be done by asking the question: "From the perspective of [insert role], should Horace A. Mann Elementary School accept the Reebok, Inc. offer?" Teachers can encourage students to develop multiple arguments and reactions for their role. Students should be encouraged to take notes and jot down arguments that they find persuasive and compelling, as these notes will become useful later in the role-playing exercise. A variant of this could be selecting one, two, or more students to take notes for the whole group. Teachers may want to introduce background discussion on topics such as corporate power, free speech, and school computer needs as a way to spur creative argument invention (25 minutes).

Step Three: Simulated public debate

• Entire class reconvenes and simulated public debate is explained. Students are asked to continue to stay within their roles as they debate the Reebok, Inc. offer (25 minutes). Team of two teachers moderates and steers the debate by linking student comments in an unfolding narrative thread, facilitating interaction and dialogue among roles, and posing new wrinkles in the scenario when appropriate to steer discussion. What follows is a list of scenario-building resources available to moderators:

--What sort of arguments would Reebok, Inc executives make at the all-school assembly held to consider the offer?

--Students and teachers, would you have any questions for the Reebok, Inc. executives at the assembly? Reebok, Inc. executives, how would you answer these questions?

--The local newspaper has been following story (recent Greenbrier H.S. Coke Day incident has spurred interest) and after the all-school assembly, a reporter calls on parents for their reactions. Parents, how do you respond to the reporter's question: "Do you support the Reebok, Inc. offer?"

--Deal is done, then one day student draws Nike swoosh on her own Reebok shoe in art class. Reebok, Inc. executives demand that she is suspended from school. Parents, what are you going to say to Reebok, Inc. executives?

--Deal is done, and student writes a poem critical of Reebok, Inc. Teacher calls in parent for conference. What does teacher say? Possible twist: How does parent respond to teacher's request that student take back the poem in the interest of protecting the corporate funding?

--Deal is done, and each student receives new pair of Reeboks in their size. Students, what will you do with the shoes?

Step Four: Reflection

• Review idea of perspective in argumentation and emphasize exciting nature of give-and-take in public debate. Congratulate students on their powerful arguing.

Objectives Served

This exercise focuses on developing understanding of important concepts in debate and is designed to hone skills centrally related to oral and written communication. The following descriptions can be used to satisfy many English, Communications, Language Arts, and leadership content standards for curriculum:

• Argument invention. Students gain practice inventing arguments deliberatively in small-group brainstorming and spontaneously as responses to others in the simulated public debate.

• Argument delivery. The simulated public debate is a forum for students to build confidence and hone oral persuasion skills.

• Note-taking for oral presentation. The small-group breakout brainstorming sessions are used to generate texts that guide oral presentation in the simulated public debate. This linkage enables students to practice interplay between oral and written media of communication.

• Perspectival argumentation. Small-group brainstorming and role-playing performance in the simulated public debate challenge students to look at issues from different viewpoints and then follow through by performing these roles in unfolding classroom dialogue.

• Co-operative role-playing. Students follow each others comments in the simulated public debate and learn to engage in collaborative, dramatic dialogue.

• Public debate. Students gain understanding of the dynamics of an unfolding public debate on an important community issue. This understanding provides an exemplar that can be used to frame discussion of public debate projects in the future.

Alternate Options

There are obviously many other public controversies that could be presented/explored in order to encourage the above role playing exercises. The roles explored within the controversies could also be changed/extended. The format of the role playing is open to much flexibility. Students may "act out" scenarios in the front of the class or they main remain seated in the configuration of the "public forum." This will depend on the needs of the students, the ideas of each teacher and the flow of the role playing conversation. The main goals of encouraging children to identify multiple perspectives, embody these perspectives and articulate their understandings/ideas from these perspectives may be reached in infinite ways.

Reflections

This exercise inspired much thinking, collaboration and detailed analyses. It was an excellent follow-up to the previous lessons which introduced debate as a concept and allowed children to initially experiment with argument development and articulation. The concept of "playing roles" greatly enhanced the students' ability to appreciate some of the more subtle nuances of specific argumentation. It encouraged articulation of ideas through both body and mind, and allowed more flow of spontaneous argumentation. The collaborative brainstorming effort within "perspective groups" also aided in facilitating discussion from *all* students, not just those who are already bold and risk-taking speakers.

There were times within the role playing when some students' interest began to fade. Perhaps we could have encouraged note taking throughout the public debate forum. It is also important to change continuously the focus of the discussion in order to bring in a variety of speakers and pique interest by all parties at all times. This is a challenge. Previously thought-out questions by the moderators are necessary to inspire a fruitful, pedagogical discussion.

There were times when we encouraged children to move to the front, back or middle of the room and stand, sit or otherwise "act out" their roles as they were making arguments. This seemed to allow more steadied argumentation by the speakers, though the rest of the audience began to fade in their interest if these "staged" acting sessions lasted too long. It is important to strive for as much participation from all of the students all of the time. Again, this is difficult and requires continuous changing of the point of argumentation, but careful planing can aid in this process.

The best interaction took place when students linked their comments to a previous speaker's and contributed to an unfolding thread of debate. This sort of linked interaction becomes difficult when students make comments that are not necessarily responsive to previous argumentation. In one of the venues, the exercise was performed on a large stage with poor acoustics; this made if difficult for all of the students to hear each of the arguments advanced, particularly when they were advanced by students on the other end of the stage. Therefore, it is important to make sure that the chosen venue features acoustic quality sufficient to support this type of "across the room" argumentation.